### October - Lesson Plan Grades K-I

# VARY YOUR VEGGIES



Begin each nutrition education lesson with a short physical activity break from the card set provided by IDPH. Have fun and get active with your students!

### **Objectives**

Learn the special characteristics of carrots, radishes and jicama.

Learn that vegetables are easy to eat as snacks.

### **Supplies Needed**

October
Pick a **better** snack<sup>™</sup> & **Act**bingo cards

Jicama, carrots, and/or radishes for taste samples

Knife

### **Tasting Opportunities**

Featured Vegetables: Carrot Jicama Radish

### **Background**

**Carrots:** Carrots originated in Asia, near Afghanistan. At that time, carrots were shades of purple! In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, orange carrots were developed in Holland in honor of William I of Orange. The orange-colored carrots were shipped from Europe to the early American settlers.

Carrots grow in a host of other colors including white, yellow, or red. The carrot is a plant with a thick, fleshy, deeply colored root, which grows underground, and feathery green leaves that emerge above ground. Carrot roots have a crunchy texture and a sweet and minty aromatic taste, while the greens are fresh tasting and slightly bitter.

Most people refer to carrots as the vegetable that is good for our eyes. This is because carrots are an excellent source of beta-carotene that converts to vitamin A in our bodies. Vitamin A is very important for healthy eyesight, skin, growth, and helps our body resist infection. In fact, carrots contain a group of plant pigments called carotenoids, and beta carotene is a member of this group. These plant pigments were first identified in carrots and therefore their name was derived from the word carrot. Carotenoids are linked to reducing chronic diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

There are many varieties of carrots. Carrots can be as small as two inches or as long as three feet, ranging in diameter from one-half of an inch to over 2 inches. Carrots are usually sold packaged in plastic bags. Baby carrots were once longer carrots that have been peeled, trimmed to 2 inches or smaller in length and packaged. True baby carrots are removed from the ground early and actually look like miniature carrots.

**Jicama:** [HEE-kah-mah] Jicama is often referred to as the *Mexican potato*. This large, bulbous root vegetable has a thin brown skin and white crunchy flesh. Its sweet, nutty flavor is good both raw and cooked. Jicama must be peeled before using.

Jicama is available from November through May and can be

## **VARY YOUR VEGGIES**

purchased in Mexican markets and most large supermarkets. It is grown in Central America and Mexico. When cooked, jicama retains its crisp, water chestnut-type texture. It is a fair source of vitamin C and potassium.

**Radish:** Radishes are root vegetables that resemble beets or turnips in appearance and texture, but have a distinct flavor. It is the root of a plant classified in the mustard family. In the United States, radishes are usually eaten raw; however, they can be added to cooked dishes or served whole. The biggest crops grown in the United States come from California and Florida, but most states grow radishes.

#### Web Site Resources

www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabettersnack www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org www.choosemyplate.gov

## Do the Activity: Kindergarten

Write the word carrot on the board. Have the students think of as many vegetables as they can that start with the letters in the word. c – cabbage, cauliflower, celery, corn, cucumbers; a – artichokes, asparagus; r – rutabaga, radishes, red cabbage; o – okra, onion; t – tomatoes, turnips.

Some letters do not have many choices, so you may want to also talk about fruits. c – cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries; a – apple, apricots, avocado; r – raisins, raspberries, rhubarb; t – tangerines

### Ist Grade

Write the word "carrot" vertically on the chalkboard. As a class write an acrostic poem that describes the carrot. The other name for an Acrostic poem is a Name poem.

For example: **C**arrots are crunchy **A**nd good for you

Really, really good for you! Roots are what carrots are

Orange is the color that helps my eyes

They taste great!

### Talk It Over:

What part of the plant are we eating when we eat jicamas, radishes and carrots? *roots* 

What does the root of a plant do? Roots function like feet. They help plants stay firmly in the soil. They take up water for the plants. Nutrients from the soil enter plants through their roots and help them grow. The water and minerals move from





## **VARY YOUR VEGGIES**

the roots to the stems.

What color groups would jicama, radish and carrot fit into? Jicama – white or tan/brown; Radish – red; Carrot – yellow/orange

Explain that jicama [HEE-kah-mah] is often referred to as the *Mexican potato*.

### **Apply:**



Tasting Opportunity

Pick a **better** snack<sup>™</sup> reminds students that it is easy to eat vegetables as snacks. Have students raise their hands if they have never eaten a carrot. Have students raise their hands if they have never eaten a radish. Have students raise their hands if they have ever seen or tried jicama.

Have the students wash their hands. Cut up jicama for the students to sample. Jicama has a bland flavor similar to raw potato. Students could dip a small wedge in salsa to jazz up the flavor. Prepare a radish and carrot to sample. Ask students if they can taste any difference between a sliced large carrot and a baby carrot.

Remind them that they can then put an "X" through the square of the vegetable that they just sampled.

What would you do (with adult help) to the featured October bingo card vegetables to get them ready to eat as a snack?

Carrot – Wash. Eat. Or Peel. Eat. (How easy is that?)

Radish- Wash. Slice. Eat. (How easy is that?)

Jicama – Peel. Slice. Eat. (How easy is that?)

On the back of the Pick a **better** snack<sup>™</sup> & **Act** bingo card for each month, there is information for their parents and grandparents. Send the bingo card home and ask students to encourage their family to pick out a snack idea to try at home



## **VARY YOUR VEGGIES**

### **Extend the Activity**



Art, Music & PE Offer construction paper, scissors, and glue (or glue sticks) at a learning center for the students to create their own "carrot" person or "jicama" person.



Language Arts & Reading

Read The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss, Scholastic Inc., 1993.



Math

Read <u>Just Enough Carrots</u> by Stuart J. Murphy, Scholastic Inc, 1997. Discusses fewer, same, more.



Science & Health

Place a variety of potatoes (such as Russet, Yukon Gold, and Red Pontiac) and a jicama at a learning center for students to explore with their five senses (except taste).



**Social Studies** 

Locate Mexico on a map to indicate the origins of jicama.

